

# The Commoner

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## Disarmament

The United States is in a position to render incalculable service to the cause of universal peace. The nations of Europe, gory with the blood of war and bent to the earth under the burden of militarism and navalism, are powerless to emancipate themselves from the false systems that have brought woe upon them.

The United States, and the United States alone, can furnish the leadership necessary for their release. The figures which represent the policy of preparedness in this country, as well as in Europe, are appalling. The expenditures of the leading nations for army and navy today are several times as great as in 1913.

Our government should immediately invite all the nations to join it in progressive disarmament on land and sea, with a view to the reduction of armies and navies until they will represent a force sufficient only for the preservation of domestic order and the policing of the seas. If all nations cannot be brought into an agreement we should co-operate with such nations as will join us and go as far as they can be persuaded to go. The United States should stand for the maximum of disarmament—for all that can be secured and at the earliest possible moment.

Our nation should do even more. If other nations will not join us, we should have the faith and the courage to set an example by acting alone, if necessary. We should call upon the masses throughout the world to urge their governments into disarmament. The professional soldiers and the navy heads in the old world can hardly be expected to lead in such a movement. Their business tends almost irresistibly to create in them an exaggerated idea of the necessity for force, just as their separation from the producing masses makes them less sensitive to the weight of the people's burdens. The makers of munitions—men who feel that they have a vested interest in carnage—are still powerful in the European capitals. These will, of course, oppose reductions. We cannot afford to allow foreign militarists and foreign manufacturers to decide our nation's policy on so vital a question. The masses cry out for relief and need only a standard around which to gather. Let the United States raise the standard. Let the call be issued in the name of humanity; in the name of brotherhood and it should be issued before the threat of universal bankruptcy drags the question down to a money level and makes it a matter of stern necessity.

Let the appeal be made to the conscience of the world before it becomes necessary to make it to the world's pocketbook.

The churches of the United States should invite the churches of all nations to unite in petitions to their governments and in prayer to God for aid in putting an end to the scourge of war. Action should be immediate, universal and continuous. Our motto should be: "Disarmament—by agreement if possible, by example if necessary."

W. J. BRYAN.

## THE WAGES OF SIN

The Commoner does not bring before its readers news items that relate to infidelity on the part of husbands or wives, but it would neglect an opportunity to serve the cause of morality if it failed to call attention to the punishment recently visited on one of the most prominent business men of New York because of charges affecting his moral character. He instituted proceedings for divorce on statutory grounds and his plea would have caused no sensation but for a counter charge that brought the same accusation against him. In society some took his side and some the side of his wife, but in the business world he became an impossibility. His bank at first refused to accept his resignation, but a little later reconsidered and accepted. He steps down from the presidency of the nation's biggest bank to fight out his domestic quarrel as a private citizen. "The wages of sin is death." Public opinion will not tolerate a lowering of the standard of chastity; the family is still sacred and the advent of woman into politics is likely to bring the law into harmony with conscience—not by degrading woman but by raising man to her level.

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## PACKERS BLAME BUTCHERS

On another page will be found a Washington dispatch which will be read with interest. President Brown of the Live Stock Exchange says the butchers are charging excess profits and he gives the figures to prove it. Hogs and cattle are down to pre-war prices. The meat markets should be notified—they seem to be ignorant of the fact.

There should be a trade commission in every state and in every city. The charges of the middleman are intolerable.

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## AMERICA IN CONSULTATION

President Harding has acted wisely in accepting the invitation of the Allies to send a representative to confer on world politics. Our representative is not to have a vote and our nation is not to be bound by action taken. That is as it should be. We give them the benefit of our wisdom and experience but we do not surrender independence of action.

W. J. BRYAN.

## DISARMAMENT NOW

Senator Borah and Senator Pomerene are right in their efforts to secure immediate action on the subject of disarmament. We can not afford to wait a day. Every hour adds to the burden of armaments; every contract postpones reduction. Every Democrat in the Senate and House should talk and vote for disarmament—disarmament NOW. Disarmament—by agreement if possible, by example if necessary.

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Dollar a year men are reported as being very numerous around Washington at the present time. They are anxious, however, to draw salaries ranging from five thousand a year upwards.

## Shifting The Burden

Now that Secretary Mellon has made his recommendations the lines can be drawn on the question of taxation. He advocates the repeal of the excess profits tax and a flat rate of fifteen per cent on all corporate incomes. That relieves the profiteer and shifts the burden over on to the small corporations, most of which have dealt honestly with the public. The people will not stand for it. The word EXCESS explains the tax on profiteers; the tax is intended to take a part of that which the profiteers should not have collected from the consumers. It was intended partly for revenue and partly to discourage excessive charges. To take it off will encourage profiteering; to increase the tax on all corporations will discourage legitimate business.

The secretary also recommends a reduction in the large surtaxes but does not propose a reduction in the lower rates. He suggests that the maximum rate should be 40 per cent this year and 33 1-3 per cent next year. This is one-third off to the owners of big incomes without relief to the poor. It will hardly pass. Some Democrat will propose a horizontal reduction on all income tax rates—then watch the roll call. One-third of the Americans live on farms and farm prices have been deflated. Wheat, corn, oats, hogs, cattle and eggs are selling at pre-war prices, but the farmers can not buy much more than half as much with the money received for their crops. If any one needs a little favoritism the farmer surely does, but instead of favoritism he gets discrimination against him. The masses must be on the alert—the reactionaries are at work.

W. J. BRYAN.

## PROHIBITION GROWS

Ontario has gone dry by 200,000 majority. That dries up the Canadian border for a long distance. New York has passed a law in harmony with the Volstead law; so has New Jersey. Soon Great Britain, Mexico and Cuba will be asked to withdraw protection from smugglers, and Americans going from this country to join in conspiracies against our prohibition and other laws will be denied the privilege of returning. Prohibition grows.

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## THE LIQUOR QUESTION

Chairman Volstead has introduced a bill to close the leak in the enforcement law made by the Palmer ruling. It will prevent the use of beer as a medicine and limit the use of wine and alcohol for medicinal purposes. Volstead is right. The medical profession, one of the noblest, would be degraded by the Palmer ruling; a wave of general debility would sweep over the country; men would have to pretend sickness in order to get a drink and the more they drank the sicker they would be. Stop the leak.

W. J. BRYAN.